

Gallows Readied for Tshombe

proceedings can be brought. The answer to that question is disturbingly easy, namely "No"—because at the present moment there are no diplomatic relations between Algeria and the Congo, so that whatever were the extradition agreements that previously obtained, for the moment they are inoperative.

The second question, which could only be asked if the first question were answered favorably to the Congolese petitioners, was whether Tshombe had committed non-political and hence extraditable crimes in the Congo. The verdict of the Algerians, prompted of course by the Congolese, was that he had—that he had murdered Patrice Lumumba, stolen money, committed graft, whatever.

The court appears simply to have accepted the Congo's bill of particulars, much as the old Jacobin court would accept as proof anyone's accusations, provided the rhetoric was sufficiently revolutionary, and trundle off the defendant to instant death at the guillotine.

Mobutu promptly announced that Tshombe would be put to death immediately upon arrival, that there was no need for further legal folderol. Tshombe has already been "tried" in absentia and of course found guilty of every heinous misdeed conjurable in the imagination of Mobutu. There was no defense, no rules of evidence enforced. It was as much a sham as the Congolese democracy.

So Tshombe waited to be deported. Even now he may be on his way. Indeed, for all we know surely, he may be dead at this moment.

Whatever delay there has been is probably attributable to certain mechanical difficulties in transshipping him to the Congo. How actually does one manage that? One can hardly expect Pan American Airways to schedule an "Execution Special" from Algiers to Leopoldville. No, the commercial carriers are unlikely to want to furnish their facilities for that grisly mission.

And the Congo has no airplanes of its own, at least none that could easily negotiate the long journey from North Africa to Central Africa. They have a couple of Piper Cubs, but whom would they hire to fly them all that way? Charles Lindbergh?

Tshombe appears certainly to be headed.

But what then? How can Tshombe be executed simultaneously by each and every Africa state? Perhaps the notion is to execute him on color TV, for the delectation of the entire continent. Perhaps the Ford Foundation will be asked to finance the facilities. The United Nations, which has been so eloquently silent during the entire fiasco, would be an appropriate sponsor.